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AUTHOR Stepp, Laura Sessions
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ABSTRACT

Noting that amid the enormous change inherent in early adolescence, many parents fail to distinguish between behaviors signaling healthy growth and those indicating troubled development, this book uses the stories of 12 representative adolescents from various locations in the United States and existing research literature to provide guidance on rearing well-adjusted children. The book identifies signs of promise and of danger, and offers advice on when and how to intervene to encourage growth or prevent trouble. The book is presented in four parts. Part 1, "Knowing Who They Are," focuses on identity development during early adolescence, how parents can facilitate their child's drive toward competence, the impact of family disintegration on adolescent development, and normalcy. Part 2, "The Company They Keep," demonstrates the critical role of friends for healthy development. Part 3, "Learning in and out of School," highlights the importance of meeting adolescents' emotional needs related to learning, examines how students wrestle with ethical concepts in middle school, and investigates the learning when a child assumes a hobby or a job. Part 4, "The Right Connections," focuses on the role of significant non-family adults in adolescents' lives. Each part begins with a list of concrete suggestions for parents. The book concludes with a discussion of what was learned during the interviews with adolescents, including the importance of parents maintaining communication while relinquishing control, treating adolescents with respect, giving them responsibility, and sharing them with other adults. Each chapter contains references. (A bibliography of approximately 85 print references and approximately 50 Web sites is appended.) (KB)

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